

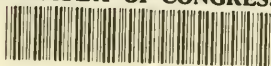
E

446

R26

Prize Essay on the compara-
tive economy of free and
slave labour in agriculture.
By James Raymond.
1827.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00013880451





Class E 446

Book .R 26







25
2:11
PRIZE ESSAY,

with the Author's Remarks

ON THE

45.10
COMPARATIVE ECONOMY

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR,

174
730
IN AGRICULTURE.

BY JAMES RAYMOND,

OF FREDERICK, MARYLAND.

APPROVED AND PUBLISHED BY THE COMMITTEE ON ESSAYS,

OF THE

FREDERICK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

What makes the nations smile,
Improves their soil, and gives them double suns ;
And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
In nature's richest lap.

THOMSON.

\$ FREDERICK:

PRINTED BY JOHN P. THOMSON.

.....

1827.

Handwritten text at the top of the page, possibly a title or header, written in a cursive script.

Handwritten text in the upper section of the page, continuing the cursive script.

The main body of the document, consisting of several paragraphs of handwritten text in cursive script, which is mostly illegible due to fading and staining.

22.5.22/6/17

THE COMPARATIVE ECONOMY

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE.

THE question before us is a branch of the general question of slavery. But perhaps it does not embrace the most fascinating topics for discussion, which are presented to the mind by the whole of that great and momentous subject. It reaches none of those elevated objections to domestic slavery, which many of the wise and good think they discover in politics, religion, or natural law. We are now simply to compare free with slave labour, as a means of cultivating the soil. We are to answer the very natural enquiry of the farmer,* which of these species of labour his own personal advantage calls upon him to employ. If we can convince him that free labour is the best, slavery, we hope, will in time go out of fashion, like an unhandy farming tool on the introduction of a new one upon an improved model.

This, I shall endeavour to do. I shall endeavour to show that free labour is more convenient and cheaper than the labour of slaves.

One of the most important circumstances of convenience, and therefore of profit, which can be incident to farm labour, is, that it should be easily varied in its quantity. Nothing is more variable than the quantity of labour which the farmer has occasion to employ upon his farm at different times and under different circumstances. The changes of the seasons as they severally occur, each in their turn, call upon the farmer to make corresponding changes in the quantity of his labour. He cannot conveniently or profitably employ as much labour in winter as in summer. The fluctuations of commerce

* The word *farmer* is used throughout this essay to signify one who in any way carries on the business of cultivating the soil.

is another cause which often induces the farmer to change from a kind of farming which employs a given number of hands, to a kind which would employ a much greater or less number. For example, the state of the markets may be such, that the corn and wheat growers would find it profitable to turn their attention to the growing of wool, which employs very few labourers compared to the former kinds of farming. The soil itself, also requires frequent changes in the kind of husbandry. In modern days, the great secret of good farming is supposed to consist in a proper rotation of crops. But the most important rotation is from tilling to grazing, and *vice versa*. The good northern farmer, after tilling his lots a few years, lays them down to grass. This he calls letting his lands rest. But if he cultivated with slave labour, whilst his lands were resting, most of his labourers would also be resting at his expense.

The inconvenience of making frequent changes in the quantity of slave labour, and of suiting its amount to the requirements of the farmer, under every circumstance, must present itself to every one who reflects upon the subject. But what is more, the moral sense of society has erected an insuperable barrier to these changes. Public sentiment denies the character of respectability to men who are in the habit of buying and selling slaves. A farmer who should purchase a large number of slaves, to perform the labour of his farm in summer, and who should sell them again when winter approaches, and so on from year to year, would be denied a respectable standing in the community. But where labour is free, and therefore the subject of contract between the employer and the labourer, these changes are frequently taking place throughout the year. The farmer purchases labour precisely as he purchases any other commodity in the market, in such quantities and at such times as he wants it. He employs his labourers by the day, the month, or the year, as best suits his convenience or interest.

Nor does the farmer, by thus regulating the quantity of his labour to suit his own convenience, thereby discommode or impose any hardships upon the labourers.

Where labour is performed by freemen exclusively, hiring labourers upon a farm are not necessarily confined to that occupation. They often unite some mechanic art, or some other employment, to that of labouring on a farm for hire during the summer months. Every species of labour being respectable, because it is all performed by freemen, when the labourer is not wanted upon the farm of his employer, he is neither precluded or unqualified from turning his hand to something else. In one shape or another, he is constantly promoting the trifold interest of himself, his employers, and his country. He is at one time employed in the farmer's field to supply his country with bread; at another he "guides the tool mechanic," or perhaps he has embarked upon the "mountain wave," for the purpose of transporting the surplus production of his farm labour to some foreign port. In each of these employments, he is supporting himself, furthering the interest of property-holders, and promoting national wealth. This accounts not only for the thriving condition of the labourers and employers in free states, but also for the circumstance that free states support a much more numerous population than the slave states.

But, it will be asked, if labourers are thus at liberty to bestow their labour when and where they please, what security has the farmer, that they will consult his convenience and interest in serving him? Talk to a Maryland farmer of free labour, and perhaps he will tell you that free labourers are capricious; that they will often take advantage of their liberty and forsake him, at the most hurrying season of his crops. Now, if there is any soundness in this objection to free labour, is it not remarkable that it should never be made, except by those farmers who work slaves? Farmers in free states feel no apprehension that their farms will lie fallow for want of labour to till them, or that their crops when raised, will return into the earth for want of labour to gather them. The farmer is no more at the mercy of labourers where they are free, than mechanics or manufacturers in Maryland or England, are at the mercy of the journeymen they employ. In this system of universal liberty, there is a controuling power, a regulating principle, which like

a courteous master of ceremonies, accommodates the wants of the whole world much better than any number of individuals can be accommodated by attempting violently to help themselves. In other words, the conflicting interests and necessities of each are the accommodation and security of all.

Though this sentiment, in one form of expression or another, is the basis of all modern theories of human polity, I will not ask a concession of its application to the present subject. Indeed such a concession would be yielding up the discussion. To say the conflicting interest and necessities of employer and labourer would most commodiously regulate their intercourse, is to use another phraseology to express, that free labour is preferable to slave. This being the point in dispute, I will endeavor to settle it, by showing its consanguinity to a family of maxims that have not been questioned for several centuries.

Labour and the fruits of labour both possess the same commercial properties. Labour, like the fruits of labour, is property; an article of bargain and sale; a commodity in the market, and as such, possesses the same commercial nature and constitution with every other commodity that is bought and sold. All the world agree, as a general proposition, that the most effectual method of rendering every commodity which is the subject of private property, cheap, plentiful and of good quality, and of placing it within the reach of all who wish to make use of it, is to secure to the producer of the commodity all the profits he can make by producing it; by leaving him to produce it when he pleases; to sell it to whom he pleases, where he pleases, and for the most that he can get. It is by these equitable laws, this free and unshackled intercourse, that the farmer is always able to supply himself with the coffee of the West Indies, the tea of the East Indies, the carpets of Turkey, the manufactures of Europe, in short, with every luxury and comfort which the world affords. The effect of a different system, with regard to the products of labour, may be easily illustrated. For example: Suppose the rest of the world should say to the farmers—Gentlemen, we

are now too dependant on you for existence. Meat and bread, the comforts and necessities of life, come to the rest of mankind exclusively through your hands. Perhaps you may combine to close those hands upon us, and starve all but yourselves. To prevent so melancholy an occurrence, and at all events to render ourselves independent of your caprices, we must alter the existing laws and take from you the right of disposing of your crops according to your own will and pleasure. What would be the farmers' reply? Would they not say—Fellow citizens, take your own course. What produce we have raised, under the presumption that we were to dispose of it as we pleased, you can take and make the most of. But look out for short crops next year. We do not cultivate our lands if others are to enjoy the fruits. The world remained a wilderness until the producer was rendered secure in his rights to his produce. Depart from this policy, which has filled the world with abundance, and the earth will soon revert to its original state of sterility. Now, all I ask of the farmer, is, that he should extend this reasoning on from the fruits of labour to labour itself. I ask him to believe, that the tree and the fruit are related together by one common nature. The same principle which renders it such good policy in the rest of mankind to protect the farmer in his right to his crops, renders it equally politic in the farmer to protect the labourer in the right to his labour. Labour, like wheat, is a commodity. The farmer is the consumer of labour, and the labourer is the producer. And as the rest of the world, in order to render the farmer's wheat cheap, plentiful, and of a good quality, are obliged to protect him in raising or producing it; so the farmer can render labour cheap, plentiful, and of good quality only by securing to the labourer, the raiser, the producer of the commodity, all the profits he can make by its production.

Slavery is such an extravagant departure in man from his own acknowledged policy and principles, that the contrast becomes ludicrous. The right which a man has to his own labour is the only private property which exists by natural law. By the laws of nature, the external world belonged to the human family

as tenants in common. But while this was the case, no man would bestow his own labour upon the external objects around him, because those objects might be taken from him by some of his co-tenants, and with them would go the labour he had bestowed. To remedy this evil, to secure to man the private property he had in his own labour, and thereby induce him to become industrious, the whole external world which was before held in common by the human race, was divided into private property also. Thus, mankind have artificially divided the whole of the external world into private property for the purpose of securing to the labourer his rights to his own labour, and then they resort to slavery to counteract that purpose! A man's natural right to his own labour is first made the basis of all artificial property; and is then sacrificed and made the subject of that very artificial property of which it is the origin and support!

I state these counter currents in human conduct for the purpose of showing that they must lead to results as opposite as their courses. If reducing the external world to private property, by securing to the labourer the reward of his labour, has been the origin of commerce, agriculture, the arts and sciences, if it has been the means of filling the world with abundance and comfort; slavery, by depriving the labourer of the rewards of his labour, and thereby taking from him the motives to industry, must of necessity be attended by contrary effects. If securing to the producer of all other commodities, the profits of producing, renders them cheap, and plentiful, and of good quality, then it follows, that in order to render labour cheap, plentiful, and of good quality, the labourer, who is the producer of that commodity, must be rendered secure in the profits of producing it. It would be as wise for the rest of the world to attempt to provide against famine by taking from the farmer the disposal of his crops, as it is for the farmer to attempt to provide against a scarcity of labour by infringing the liberty of the labourer. Leave the conflicting interests and necessities of the producer and consumer of labour to regulate it in every particular, and the heavens may become as brass and the clouds yield no rain, but the faithful hand of the free la-

bourer will never desert the fields of the farmer. Where the labourer is free, the current price and fair treatment is as sure to command labour, as a fair price and fair dealing is to command corn, meat, houses, land, or any thing else. If you are particularly in want of labour, let it be known by offering the smallest fraction above the current price, and like other commodities under like circumstances, it will throng you. You may thus concentrate labour to any place, for any lawful purpose, private or public, peaceful or hostile; to cultivate the soil, dig canals, make roads, erect fortifications, or handle the musket. And how grateful ought man to be, at finding human nature so constituted, that in order to command human labour, and to use it either for public or private purposes, there is no necessity of subjecting our fellow-creatures to involuntary bondage. What wisdom and benevolence is manifested by the Deity in so making the world, that every thing in it, withers beneath the influence of slavery. With reference to farming, slavery may justly be defined an unnatural and involuntary relation between the farmer, the slave, and the soil, which operates to the mutual destruction of all. If the slave is obliged to perform involuntary labour for the master, the master is also compelled to find employment and support for the slave, whether he finds him profitable or otherwise. The land is also laid under an exhausting system of contribution, and though out of heart from too much tilling, it must nevertheless be annually visited by the plough and hoe.

In matters of profit and loss, however conclusive a theory may appear on paper, it may nevertheless be justly suspected if it stands opposed to the practice of mankind. "The children of this world are wise in their generation." Mankind are selfish, and they study their interest with such care and assiduity, that as a body they are not apt to mistake it. Avarice knows the road to wealth even better than philosophy herself. If slave labour, then, is so palpably and so extremely unprofitable, how does it happen that it has been so extensively resorted to?

A slight attention to the circumstances under which slavery was introduced into the West Indies and America, by those European nations who would not tolerate it at home, will answer this question. Take England for an example. When England introduced slavery into her American colonies and islands, she had as much free labour at home as the property holders wanted to employ. Accordingly "slaves could not breathe in England." Their respiration could only go on in those parts of her *christian* dominions, where free labour was not to be had. England, at that time, placed great reliance on her colonies as a source of revenue. It was her settled policy to monopolize all her colonial commerce, and to increase that commerce as much as possible by increasing the productions of the soil. Here was a widely extended territory, with a soil and climate adapted to the raising of the most profitable articles of commerce. But the country was not yet populated. An immediate supply of labour was necessary, in order to render the colonies an immediate and productive source of revenue. As a momentary expedient, therefore, and in order to derive a momentary advantage, England commenced filling her colonies with slaves from Africa. The American planters, also, consulting their immediate profit, and disregarding future consequences, and looking upon slave labour as better than none, at first fell in with the slave policy of England. But our forefathers finally discovered, that if slavery expedited the supply of labour on the one hand, it deteriorated its quality on the other. They became anxious that the country should populate with better inhabitants than the African slave. In their colonial legislatures, they imposed heavy duties on the importation of slaves, and in 1772, "Virginia was encouraged to look up to the throne and implore paternal assistance in averting a calamity of a most alarming nature." But the throne, (I mean of England) was in the habit of turning a deaf ear to American prayers. The final welfare of America was of small importance, compared to the immediate supply of the English treasury.

The same causes which induced England to prohibit slavery at home, while she was pouring them into her colonies, led Spain to pursue the same course. And so of France, and all the European powers, who were supplied with free labour at home, but had infant colonies in the West Indies or America, which would lie for a short time without cultivation for the want of labour, unless a forced, unnatural, and in the long run, an unprofitable system was resorted to, to supply the article. Instead of waiting for the new world to populate with labourers by the emigration of freemen, and the natural increase of population, slavery was resorted to as a more speedy method of introducing labour. But the ten millions of inhabitants with which two hundred years have peopled the United States, show how small must have been the necessity of enslaving mankind in order to introduce human labour into America. Labour, like all other commodities, if it had been left free to regulate itself by the conflicting interests and necessities of mankind, would soon have found its way to the place where it was wanted, and supplied the demand. That this momentary deficiency of free labour was the sole cause of introducing slavery into America, appears conclusively from the fact, that those nations who introduced it prohibited slavery at home, where there was free labour enough to do the work. Slave labour could only obtain where free labour was absent. The former was not able to compete with the latter where the employer had his choice.

Having accounted for the manner in which the acting part of the world have been led to employ slave labour, by circumstances which caused them to violate their own general rules and maxims, in matters of interest, I will now attempt to add a few reasons, why free labour, from the nature of things, as a general rule, must be the cheapest. The natural price of all human labour, which it requires no uncommon skill to perform, is barely a support of the labourers. Circumstances may vary this price for a time. But a bare support of the labourers is the point to which the price of human labour is always tending. The reason is obvious. The population of

any country is regulated by the means of subsistence. The means of subsistence with the labouring class is their labour. If the price of labour is such that their labour more than supports them, they rapidly increase in numbers. This increase of labourers has a natural tendency to reduce the price of labour, precisely as the increased production of any other commodity has a tendency to reduce its price. Thus, labourers continue to increase and the price of labour to decrease, until the labour of those who have no extraordinary skill at some mechanic art, or in some lucrative profession, is barely sufficient to support them. If labourers multiply beyond this limit pauperism ensues, and becomes more and more aggravated until it checks the increase of population. The labour of the labouring classes becomes inadequate for their support, and immense numbers of them must perish for want of food, or be fed at the table of public bounty. This is at present the case in England and in most of the old countries in Europe. At the present prices of labour in England, the labour of the labouring classes is not sufficient to support them by several millions of pounds sterling. This deficiency is now made up by the poor rates; but if the labourers were slaves, it would be supplied from the private pockets of their masters. Admitting, then, that a slave population will do as much work as a free, and that each will consume the same value of food and clothing, and the present amount of the poor rates in England is the precise sum which the immediate employers of English labour save to themselves by its being free instead of slave.

But to talk of a slave's using the economy, and doing the labour of a freeman! The word slave is but another name for a lazy, wasteful, faithless fellow. It never was doubted, that a man constantly stimulated by the considerations that his character, his wages, in short, his living depends upon the industry and fidelity with which he labours, is much more active than he would be if he was put in motion by no other stimulant than the fear of punishment. Free labourers are always more or less animated by that active principle which may be seen in its full and most beautiful display by attending the plough-

ing match of our society. There is a constant rivalry among them, who shall maintain the character of doing the most work, in the shortest time, in the best manner. Among slaves, this rivalry is reversed. The question with them is, who shall do the least work, in the longest time, in the worst manner, and escape punishment. I do not claim that there is no exception to these general rules. But these are the different principles, with which nature has furnished man, as the general regulators of his conduct in the different predicaments of free and slave. With regard to the expense of supporting a free or slave population, I will only remark, that if the food and clothing of slaves may be a little coarser than that of free men, that consideration is counterbalanced by the superior economy of free men in the consumption. The motives of a poor free labourer to use the strictest economy in living, and the temptation of a slave to be wasteful, are engrafted upon the same principles of human nature which lead the former to be industrious and the latter to be idle, and they operate with the same force in the one case as the other. To sum up our reasoning, it amounts to this. A free population of labourers cause the earth to produce vastly more, and of that production they themselves consume vastly less than a slave population. In either case, the labourers only deduct what they consume from what they cause the earth to produce, as the price of their labour, and the remainder goes to the property holders.

The doctrine that a bare support of the labouring classes of society, is the natural price of their labour, may seem to lead to the conclusion, that a poor free labourer can never rise above his poverty. But such a conclusion by no means follows. We have been viewing labourers as a whole class of society, and not as individuals. When viewed as a member of the labouring class of society, each active individual labourer is considered as incumbered with his share of the old, the young, and the infirm, which his labour must support besides maintaining himself. But when we view labourers, or any other class, as individuals, we see that the burden of supporting the weak is not laid thus equal-

ly upon the strong. We see strong and healthy labourers, in the vigour of manhood, unincumbered with an equal proportion of the weak and infirm. If such a labourer, so circumstanced, could only support himself, if he could lay up nothing by his industry, the weak and the infirm, and those whom they encumber, could not exist. Therefore, in a country where the price of labour stands precisely at its natural point, where it supports, and only supports the labourers as a class, a young, healthy labourer, who only labours for himself, will be able to rise above his poverty. He will be able to lay up each year as much as he would have to expend in supporting the young, the old, the sick, and the unfortunate, if he bore his share of these burdens. With good management, the savings of one year become a helping fund the next, the use of which added to the income of his labour, quickens his pace from the vale of poverty, and in a few years he finds himself among the substantial property-holders of the country.

In further proof of the position that slave labour is expensive, I would ask, where has slavery principally centered? In the most fertile countries, and in southern climates which grow the most profitable productions. The reason is, that slavery is a tax that poor soils and cold climates cannot endure. The cost of cultivating an unproductive soil with slaves is more than the productions of the soil will bring in return. A lazy, negligent, wasteful slave, upon a cold, sterile, ungrateful soil, instead of producing any thing for the support of his master, would starve himself. But cold countries and comparatively unproductive soils are cultivated with free labour to great advantage. Switzerland, Scotland, and New England, are striking examples. The freedom and character of the labouring population render each of these countries, to which nature has not been liberal in her gifts, populous and wealthy. But reduce the free labouring population (if it were possible) to a state of slavery, and no man can doubt the consequences that would follow. Pauperism and famine would ensue, until it reduced the population to the number which could live in idleness and waste upon a poor, half cultivated soil.

Lastly, let me particularly remind the farmer, that the economy, industry and good husbandry of labourers, are not more effectual in increasing the population of a country, than they are in enhancing the price of lands. The price of land is every where affected by the character and number of agricultural labourers upon it. Land without labourers is good for nothing. It might as well be water, as the most fertile soil. It is the labourers upon the sandy plains of Rhode Island, that make them bear a higher price than the fertile bottoms of the Mississippi. The difference in the price of land in old and new countries, is mainly owing to the circumstance, that the former are filled with labourers and the later not. Some suppose it is the presence of those who consume the produce of the soil that raises the price of land. But it is the presence of labourers. The produce of the soil may be consumed any where, but a man must be upon the soil itself in order to cultivate it. For example, our flour bears about the same price, whether those who consume it reside in the county, in Baltimore, or in London. Let all the people of Frederick county suddenly substitute a different bread stuff in the place of wheat, and if the rest of the world continued to make use of wheat for bread, the price of our wheat would experience no perceptible change. The price of wheat remaining the same, the price of the land which produces it would also remain the same. But let all the labourers leave Frederick county, and let it become impossible to supply their places for half a century, and our lands would be worth no more than lands of the same quality and advantages in a new country. So clear it is, that it is the presence of labour to till the land, which gives it its chief value.

But the price of land is affected by the quality of the labourers, as well as the number in the country: If the labourers are so negligent, idle and wasteful that they consume as much, in value, as they cause the land to produce, the land is still of no profit to the owner. The value of the land is regulated by the value of the surplus produce which it yields after deducting the support of the labourers. A man's farm, therefore, may be of no value from three causes. First, that it is situated in a

new country where there is no labour to cultivate it, or where the quantity of land so far exceeds the quantity of labour in the country, that every man who chooses can find land enough to cultivate without paying any thing for the use of it. In this state of things, land, like air and water every where, is one of the common elements. There is more than enough for every body in the country to use as they please, and therefore no body pays for the use of it. Secondly, a man's farm may be of no value, because the quality of the soil is so indifferent, that the labour to cultivate it is worth as much in the market, as the produce which it yields. If a farm is so poor that it takes twenty dollars worth of labour, at the market price of labour, to raise twenty dollars worth of produce, at the market price of produce, the farm can hardly be said to have any value. True, the owner may labour upon his farm, and thus procure a living. But he lives, strictly speaking, not upon the income of his farm, but upon the income of his labour. His farm pays him no more for his labour than his neighbour, who cultivates richer land, is willing to pay for the same labour. It follows, thirdly, from what has been already said, that a rich soil, in a country where there are labourers enough, may produce no income to the owner, because the labourers are so idle, wasteful, and negligent, that they consume as much in value as they raise. This course of reasoning is fully sustained by the low price of the most fertile land in all new countries where labour is scarce; the high price of comparatively poor land at the north, where the labouring classes are the most industrious, economical and thrifty, and for the depreciated price of first-rate lands in Maryland, where the labourers are idle, and wasteful, and unfaithful, because they are slaves.

But it is time to conclude an argument, which the public are not prepared to believe. The period has not yet arrived, for the American public to give full credence to any part of the truth on the subject of slavery. But if slavery continues, that period will come. Our form of government, our whole policy in every particular, with the exception of African slavery, is calculated to fill the

Union with as dense a population as ever existed in any country. The limit of population is the means of sustaining life. These means are the most fully developed, and produce their utmost effect in free governments, where every citizen is left in the full enjoyment of his rights, and where he is permitted to push his way by the exercise of all his talents, skill and strength. When, from these causes, the United States shall teem with an overflowing population ; when, as frequently happens in all populous countries, some change in national affairs shall suddenly throw the poor free labourers out of employment ; when poverty and want, hunger and cold, shall excite them to phrenzy and drive them to desperation ; when to this shall be added the aggravating circumstance, that in order to sustain the system of African slavery, millions of the American poor are expelled the farmer's field, where it is their birth right to labour, that they may live ; then will be the time, for truth to burst upon a nation, which thought to reconcile the conflicting powers of the moral universe: A nation which continued to worship slavery as a household goddess, after it had constituted liberty the presiding divinity over church and state.

APPENDIX.

I had nearly concluded my essay, when a friend favored me with the second Report of the Committee of the society (in London) for the mitigation and gradual abolition of Slavery throughout the British dominions. This valuable document relates to the slavery of the British possessions in the West Indies. But it also contains some important facts and arguments relative to the abstract question of the comparative economy of free and slave labour. I therefore take the liberty of making such extracts from the pamphlet as appear to me appropriate to the present occasion, and of presenting them as an *appendix* to my essay.

It is well known to all my readers, that sugar is an article of both East and West India production. That in the East Indies the cane is cultivated and the sugar is manufactured by free labour; and that the same is done in the West Indies by slave labour. Here then the two kinds of labour come in direct competition; and the question of the comparative economy of free and slave labour seems to resolve itself into the question, whether the East or West India sugar planter can afford sugar at the cheapest rate. It would seem impossible to test the subject we have been discussing by an experiment more direct and apt than the one which the East and West India planters have been making by accident.

The result of the experiment is, that the parliament of England are obliged, in effect, to tax her own inhabitants to an enormous amount, in order to pension the West India planter, and thereby prevent him from being utterly ruined and broken up by the East India planter

with his free labourers. In other words, the English parliament grant to the West Indian a most extravagant monopoly in the sale of his sugar in England.

“ This monopoly, (says the Report before me,) is at present supported, first, by a bounty of upwards of six shillings per cwt. on the export of (West India) refined sugar, and which necessarily raises the price not only of all such sugar exported, but of all the sugar consumed at home, to the extent of the bounty; and, secondly, a protecting duty of ten shillings a cwt. more on East India than on West India sugar: thus favouring sugar grown by slave labour in preference to that grown by free labour, to the extent of about *fifty per cent.* on the cost of the article.”

“ Now, to say nothing at present of the degree in which prices are raised by the operation of the protecting duty, the cost of the West India monopoly, arising by the sugar bounty alone, may be estimated at about £1,200,000 annually. And it is this large sum, (in addition to whatever enhancement of price may be produced by the protecting duty) paid by the people of England to the growers of sugar over and above what that sugar would otherwise cost, which does in fact chiefly maintain unimpaired and unreformed, the wretched system of colonial bondage.”

* * * “ It is calculated that there are in the West Indies about eighteen hundred sugar plantations; among the proprietors of which the twelve hundred thousand pounds which the people of England are forced to pay, over and above what the same sugars would cost them if the trade were free, is of course divided; making on the average about £700 sterling annually to each proprietor; and this independently of the advantage, whatever it be, which he derives from the protecting duty.”

Thus it is manifest, that the West India slave holding sugar planter, receives a pension from England of £700 a year, to protect him from being ruined by the competition of the East India sugar planter, who works free labour.

“ An objection has been raised in the minds of many benevolent persons, to the abolition of the West India monopoly, and of the bounties and protecting duties by which it is maintained, on the

ground that a depression in the price of slave grown produce would tend to aggravate the misery of the slave, and to expose him to farther privations, and perhaps even to starvation itself."

But the committee in their report maintain,

"That whatever tends to raise the price of the slave grown produce of the colonies, tends in the same degree to rivet the chains, and to add to the labour and misery of the slave ; while the depression of its price operates beneficially, both in relaxing his bonds, abating his toils, and enlarging his comforts."

In other words, the advocates of the West India monopoly maintain, that if parliament does not interfere in this East and West India rivalry, between free and slave labour, the East India planter, with his free labour, will ruin the West India planter, with his slaves, and starve his slaves to death. But the Abolition Society maintain, that if parliament will withdraw their interference in the rivalry between free and slave labour in the East and West Indies ; if they will abolish the West India monopoly, the East India planters will compel the West India planters to set their slaves free. That if parliament will withdraw this £700 annuity to the West India planter, in order to enable him to stand his ground with slave labour against the East India-man with free labour ; it will compel the West India-man to give up the contest. Which of these opinions is correct, is totally immaterial to the present question. It is agreed by both parties, that if it were not for parliamentary interference, the slave labour of the West Indies would not be able to cope with the free labour of the East Indies, for a single year.



